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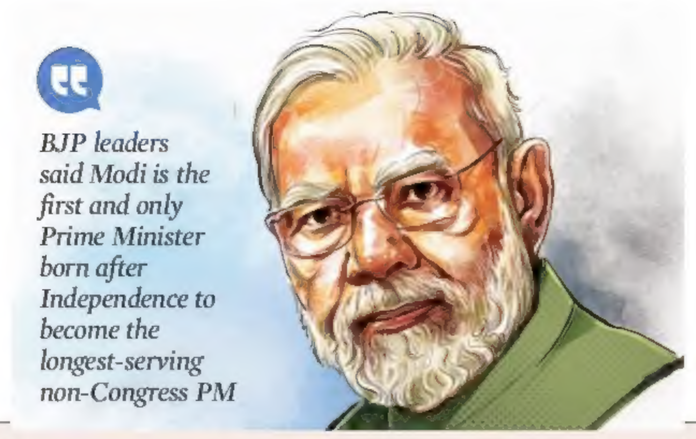

BJP leaders said Modi is the first and only Prime Minister born after Independence to become the longest-serving non-Congress PM

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MODI BECOMES SECOND LONGEST SERVING PM SURPASSING INDIRA

Narendra Modi has reached what the NDA described on Friday as a "historic milestone", consecutive terms of 11 years as prime minister

NO MEAN FEAT: 4,078 DAYS IN HIGH OFFICE

After completing 4,078 consecutive days in office, PM Modi has now surpassed former prime minister Indira Gandhi, who served for 4,077 days from 1966 to 1977. Throughout his uninterrupted 24 years in office, Modi was Gujarat chief minister for 13 years from 2001 before seamlessly occupying the post of PM after winning the general elections in 2014

VAJPAYEE TOO HAD THREE SHOTS AT PM POST

- Modi has already matched first prime minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who had won three consecutive general elections | **P11**
- BJP stalwart Atal Bihari Vajpayee too did three stints as prime minister after elections in 1996 (13-day government); 1998, when he headed the government for 13 months; and in 1999 for a full term

Six

CONSECUTIVE ELECTIONS WON BY MODI IN 2002, 2007, 2012, 2014, 2019, 2024

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

INDIA AND MALDIVES RESET BILATERAL RELATIONS

MODI GIVES MUIZZU ₹4,850 CR LIFELINE; FTA ON THE TABLE

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu during the exchange of an MoU and virtual inauguration of projects, in Male | PTI

INDIA and the Maldives on Friday unveiled a significant reset in bilateral relations, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi announcing a ₹4,850 crore line of credit (LoC) and a new framework for expanding cooperation in trade, defence, infrastructure, and digital connectivity, among others.

Modi's visit, his first to the Maldives in his third term, marks a sharp turnaround in bilateral ties, which had faced strain early in President Mohamed Muizzu's tenure when the latter tried to strengthen relations with China by moving away from India. Reflecting the renewed warmth, Muizzu and his ministers welcomed Modi at Velana airport.

After delegation-level talks, Modi said: "India is proud to be the most trusted friend of the Maldives. For us, it is always friendship first." He added that the Maldives holds a central place in India's Neighbourhood First policy and the MAHASAGAR vision for regional maritime cooperation. "India will always stand by the Maldives in strengthening its defence capabilities," Modi said, adding that deepening security ties reflect the trust between the two nations.

"Our defence and security cooperation is a testament to mutual trust. The roots of our relationship are older than history and as deep as the sea... our friendship will remain bright and clear," the prime minister said.

> **Defence and security cooperation is a testament to mutual trust. The roots of our relationship are older than history and as deep as the sea...**
>
> Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri described the visit as "a demonstration of trust and strategic convergence." On India's concerns about foreign military presence in the region, Misri said: "Security is a mutual concern. Both sides reaffirmed that peace and stability in the Indian Ocean are shared responsibilities."

The two nations agreed to move swiftly on finalising a bilateral investment treaty and launched negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA). "We hope to conclude the India-Maldives FTA quickly," Misri said.

Modi's two-day visit also aims to reinvigorate India's development partnership with the Maldives, with the ₹4,850 crore LoC at its core. "This will support infrastructure projects aligned with the priorities of the Maldivian people," Modi said.

India also agreed to ease Maldives' debt repayment obligations on existing Indian lines of credit — a move that signals New Delhi's willingness to support Male's economic recovery.

Muizzu, who once distanced from New Delhi, appreciated India's help. He also condemned the Pahalgam terror attack, expressing solidarity with India on its counterterrorism efforts.

Phase 1 over, 65.2L out of Bihar poll roll

MUKESH RANJAN AND RAMASHANKAR @ New Delhi/Patna

AS many as 65.2 lakh names have been excluded from the Bihar election rolls months ahead of the assembly polls, whose controversial voter enumeration phase ended on Friday. Voters and political parties have till September 1 to challenge the deletion or addition of names after the Election Commission of India (ECI) publishes the draft rolls on August 1.

Of the total 7.9 crore registered voters in Bihar, 22 lakh were weeded out as they were dead, 35 lakh permanently migrated, 7 lakh had registered at more than one place, and 1.2 lakh are untraceable, the ECI said. The ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) made a mockery of the summery revision of poll rolls in Bihar in January this year, which had arrived at the figure of 7.9 crore voters in the state.

The RJD, Bihar's main opposition party, said it will continue its protest against the SIR exercise. Former chief minister Rabri Devi, mother of former deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav, wondered how four crore Biharis living outside the state would be able to complete the SIR formalities within the short span of two months. She went on to allege a political plot to eliminate Tejashwi.

The RJD and the Congress have already hinted at the possibility of boycotting the state polls due in October-November if the discrepancies pointed out by them in the SIR are not properly addressed. Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi recently warned of action against 'partisan' poll officials involved in conducting the SIR exercise in Bihar.

A couple of days ago, Tejashwi said, "We are keeping the option open for boycott of the assembly polls. When the time comes, we will take a decision following a discussion with our alliance partners." Krishna Allavaru, AICC in-charge of Bihar, said: "Talks are on for every option.... This process (SIR) was not acceptable to the INDIA bloc from the beginning, and we won't accept it in the future."

7 STUDENTS KILLED, 25 HURT AS RAJASTHAN SCHOOL COLLAPSES

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

Locals rescue students trapped under debris at Piplodi village in Rajasthan | PTI

SEVEN students were killed and over 25 others were injured when a government school collapsed on Friday morning at Piplodi village in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district.

The students, mostly from Class 7, were inside the school when the structure gave way, burying the students under piles of concrete slabs, bricks and stones. Five children died on the spot, while two succumbed to injuries in hospital.

The tragedy occurred at 8 am on Monday. Moments before the collapse, students noticed debris falling from the ceiling and alerted teachers, who allegedly ignored the warning signs.

Locals said a portion of the school building collapsed with such force that it sounded like an explosion. Villagers who rushed to the site and the school staff conducted the initial rescue operation. The villagers said the children were taken out with great difficulty.

The injured were initially taken to Manohar Thana Hospital.

"Thirty-five injured children were brought in. Eleven were critical and they were referred to the district hospital in Jhalawar," said Dr Kaushal Lodha, medical officer, Manohar Thana Hospital.

"There were about 50 children in the school when it collapsed. I had alerted the teachers several times about the poor condition of the building, but no repairs were done," said Badrilal, father of a student.

Jhalawar district collector Ajay Singh Rathore said the school was not listed among structurally unsafe buildings. The Education Department suspended five teachers.

Prez sends back Aparajita bill to Bengal govt

KAUSHIK PRADHAN @ Kolkata

IN what appears to be a setback for the West Bengal government, President Droupadi Murmu recently sent the 'Aparajita Bill', passed in the state assembly last year, back to Raj Bhavan, Kolkata, after raising a few questions, sources said on Friday. Subsequently, West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose sent back the bill to the assembly Speaker.

The Centre has since conveyed its observations on certain amendments proposed to the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) through the The Aparajita Women and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024, sources in Raj Bhavan informed.

One of the proposed amendments seeks to enhance punishment for rape, from 10 years to life imprisonment for the remainder of one's life or death. The home ministry termed it as "excessively harsh and disproportionate," sources said.

EXPRESS READ

A, B-Khata regulations get stamp under GBGA

Bengaluru: The State government on Friday approved regulations for issuing A- and B-Khata for properties under BBMP. Once BBMP ceases to exist and Great Bengaluru Governance Act comes into effect, properties constructed after September 30, 2024, will not be given B-Khata | **P2**

UAV-launched guided missile trials a success

Vijayawada: DRDO has successfully carried out flight trials of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Launched Precision Guided Missile in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. Engineered for adaptability, the missile performs seamlessly across plain and high-altitude environments | **P7**

Women's panel chief enters BRT after 8 pm

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

KARNATAKA Women's Commission Chairperson Nagalakshmi Choudhary's visit to Nallikathri core forest area in Hanur taluk of Biligiriranganath Tiger Reserve at night has come under strong criticism from the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and wildlife activists. Though the BRT entry and exit gates are closed at 6 pm, Choudhary was taken inside the forest after 8 pm. But her visit was officially scheduled at 3.30 pm.

Farmers, who are already unhappy with the government ban on grazing cattle inside forests, laid siege to the BRT forest office against the dual attitude of officers.

KRRS leader Baghyaraj charged that Choudhary was allowed to travel inside the forest after 8 pm, violating rules. He demanded that Divisional Forest Officer Sripathi produce permission taken from the tiger reserve director to allow Choudhary to travel inside the forest core area beyond 6 pm.

Sripathi told *TNIE* that the commission had sent the travel particulars (TP), mentioning that the chairperson wanted to visit tribal hadis at Mavathur and Nallikathri. As it was late, forest rangers accompanied her to Nallikathri to meet tribal families. **CONTINUED ON P7**

NEET ASPIRANT DEATH

SC issues 15 rules to prevent suicides in edu institutes

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday issued 15 pan-India guidelines to curb the rising trend of suicides among students in educational institutions.

The guidelines were part of its verdict on an appeal against an Andhra Pradesh High Court order that rejected a plea to transfer the probe into the death of a 17-year-old National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) aspirant in Vishakhapatnam, to the CBI. Quashing the order, the bench directed the CBI to probe the case.

A bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, while issuing the guidelines, said they will be binding till an appropriate law or regulatory framework is enacted.

The court mandated that all educational institutions shall adopt and implement a uniform mental health policy, drawing cues from the UMMEED (Understand, Motivate, Manage, Empathise, Empower, and Develop) Draft Guidelines for the Prevention of Student Suicide, the MANODARPAN initiative, and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy, released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2022. The policy shall be reviewed and updated annually and made publicly accessible on institutional websites and notice boards.

"All educational institutions with 100 or more enrolled students shall appoint at least one qualified counsellor, psychologist, or social worker with demonstrable training in child and adolescent mental health. Institutions with fewer students shall establish formal referral linkages with professionals," it added.

The bench directed all institutions to ensure optimal student-counsellor ratio. Suicide helpline numbers shall be prominently displayed in hostels, classrooms, common areas, and on websites, the order said.

Special duty officers of CM, DCM indulge in public fight in New Delhi

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

EVEN as the power struggle between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar has subsided, their special duty officers (SDOs) attached to the Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi reportedly indulged in a much public fight.

DCM's SDO H Anjaneya alleged that CM's SDO Mohankumar C, also assistant resident commissioner (Grade-2) of Karnataka Bhavan, tried to hit him with his boots in the presence of other staffers.

Anjaneya, a Group B officer and senior by service, alleged that Mohankumar, who is younger, showed highhandedness and had an ego being CM's SDO.

Anjaneya filed a complaint against Bhavan Resident Commissioner Imkongla Jamir on July 22, marking copies to the DCM and Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, who has sought a report from the resident commissioner.

Mohankumar hails from Mysuru and had earlier worked with former union minister late V Srinivasa Prasad, a source said.

When the incident was brought to his notice, Siddaramaiah said he is not fully aware of the incident and will react only after getting the details.

Differences between the two SDOs seem to be simmering for sometime. Anjaneya alleged that Mohankumar had been scuttling his promotions and postings since the day the latter took charge as assistant resident commissioner (Grade-2).

On the alleged incident, Anjaneya said that when he went to Mohankumar's chambers, the latter took off his shoes and threatened to beat him publicly. **CONTINUED ON P4**